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Seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Bogotá, Colombia, 29 and 30 November 2007

**REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL FOR TECHNOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL
COOPERATION ON CENSUS-TAKING**

A. BACKGROUND

During the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago, Chile, from 25 to 27 July 2007, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and the United States offered to make available to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean the mobile data capture devices used in those countries and the data capture computer program, to be used for the 2010 round of censuses.

In order to move forward with the implementation of the proposal, it is necessary to specify the legal and administrative structures at the country level and the international body which will deal with managing and facilitating the use of such goods with the maximum efficiency, by staggering the dates of the countries' censuses and ensuring that the officials responsible receive timely training.

B. PROGRESS

Brazil, Colombia and Mexico have begun investigations in order to determine the legal, administrative and customs formalities necessary for the shipment of the devices, and have reported as follows:

Colombia

The only legal approach which can be used for the provision of the mobile devices and the corresponding Global Positioning System (GPS) antennas is for them to be exported temporarily and subsequently re-imported by the State. The necessary regulation is contained in the customs statute (Decree No. 2685 of 1999), article 297 et seq.

Since this is a matter of external trade, the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia (DANE) has two alternative means of implementing it:

1. To hire a customs agency to conduct the export formalities directly. The disadvantage of this option is its cost, since such agencies base their fees on the value of the goods to be exported.
2. To make the National Administrative Department of Statistics directly responsible for carrying out the formalities. This would require the following:
 - (a) Empowering an official, under the authority of the Director of the Department, to apply to the Directorate of Customs and National Taxes (DIAN) for an account to be opened in the computerized customs system. This would require the following information: (i) The name of the person or entity sending the equipment, the name of the person or entity receiving it, the description of all the goods individually according to their characteristics, and the value of each item and the total value; (ii) The official document of appointment and the certificate of possession of the legal representative of the entity; and (iii) An official application for an account to be opened in the computerized customs system.
 - (b) Opening of an account in the computerized customs system of the Directorate of Customs and National Taxes.

- (c) Appointment in writing of an official of the National Administrative Department of Statistics to be responsible on its behalf for the management of its account in the computerized customs system.
- (d) Formalities for the shipment authorization in the computerized customs system.
- (e) Should the system authorize the export, the carrying out of the formalities specified in articles 270-280 of Decree No. 2685 of 1999.

At the same time as the formalities for opening the account in the customs system and the application for shipment authorization, negotiations must also be carried out to determine the amount to be charged by the air freight carrier for shipment to the destination. This is important because, should the authorization be granted, the deadline for the shipment of the equipment is very short, and it might prove necessary to repeat the whole procedure.

Brazil and Mexico

Both countries have begun investigations in order to determine the formalities necessary for the shipment of the mobile devices to other countries.

Cooperation project

In light of the scale of this proposal, consideration has been given to alternative sources of financing for a consultancy which could define the scope of the project.

The World Bank has submitted to the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom a project entitled "Monitoring and Evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals through Innovative Censuses," whose essential aim is to carry out those activities through the promotion and appropriate use of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses.

This improvement would be achieved through investigation and systematization of examples of innovative population and housing censuses in the region, especially Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, and some European countries. Plans are also being made to include in the 2010 round of censuses a plan to maximize their contribution to administrative records and to develop the capacity to construct databases, on the basis of lessons learned from innovative experiences at the national and international levels in earlier censuses.

One of the objectives of the proposal is to facilitate the exchange of technology among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; specifically, this relates to the use of some of the funds of the project submitted to the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom in order to study viable methods for technology exchange, taking into account the opinions of legal, logistical and security experts. The World Bank proposal also refers to the work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, especially its working group on censuses, and the support of the Inter-American Development Bank in this area.

The proposed exchange can make a major contribution to the process of technology exchange and contribute to the activities of the working group on censuses of the Conference.